



HQ AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB TX



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AF team heading back to academy

By Robert Weller

Associated Press

Web Posted : 03/05/2003 12:00 AM

DENVER — A military task force investigating whether female Air Force Academy cadets were punished for reporting rapes will return to campus after it was criticized for not talking to alleged victims or a civilian rape crisis center.

Air Force Secretary James Roche has told Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., the team will return to Colorado Springs to talk with the Trust Education Safety Support Action crisis center, Allard spokesman Dick Wadhams said Tuesday.

TESSA staffers have said they have counseled 22 female cadets in the past 15 years who reported being raped.

Allard is one of at least four senators who have called for an independent inquiry in addition to Roche's task force. The senator has criticized the team not only for failing to interview TESSA workers, but also for not speaking to any of the 10 female cadets who reported rapes and remain at the academy.

"Based on some of the pressure the Air Force is getting, we assume we also will be doing that," Wadhams said.

Twenty-five current and former female cadets have complained to Allard's office about how academy officials handled their reports. Many of the women have said they were punished or even forced to leave the academy.

The investigative team left the Colorado Springs academy last Friday after working there for 10 days.

Academy officials confirmed Tuesday that investigators would return, but it wasn't immediately clear when they would do so.

Earlier Tuesday, team spokesman Lt. Col. Dewey Ford said the task force's work was far from finished.

"We gathered a lot of information. We brought it back to the working group but there is still work to be done," Ford said. "Where it is appropriate we will get more information whether it is from victims or other agencies."

The team's report is expected to be completed by the end of March, Ford said.

S. A. Express-News

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Families won't be forgotten after the GIs are deployed

By Scott Huddleston

San Antonio Express-News

Web Posted : 03/05/2003 12:00 AM

As some 17,000 troops from Fort Hood's 1st Cavalry Division prepare to deploy to Southwest Asia, officials of the nation's largest military post said Tuesday that families left behind would have a stronger system of support than during the Persian Gulf War.

Orders for the deployment were received Sunday.

Most of the more than 275 tanks and equipment attached to the division will be transported by truck or train to U.S. seaports for overseas shipment, said Dan Hassett, a Fort Hood spokesman. Troops likely will fly overseas on military or commercial aircraft.

There currently is no timeline for deployment, he said.

But the troops have continued to train and have made preparations for the families they'll leave behind, including completion of family care plans. Now, they await further orders.

"They're ready, and as soon as the wheels start turning, they will go," Hassett said.

Military spouses and other relatives have recently formed "family readiness groups" to help families get information on loved ones overseas and to provide emotional support, he said.

"Those organizations are in place," Hassett said. "They'll be here to get answers, and get information back to the other families. Now, they'll start making efforts to be sure no one is left behind."

The family support system grew out of concerns raised by family members during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, he said.

More than 12,500 members of the Fort Hood-based 4th Infantry Division who received deployment orders Jan. 20 also are waiting to deploy. Hassett declined to comment on reports that the infantry division is awaiting approval from the Turkish parliament for mobilization to Turkey, on Iraq's northern border.

The 4th Infantry Division's equipment, including Bradley Fighting Vehicles, has reportedly been sitting in ships in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Even after the 4th Infantry and 1st Cavalry divisions are fully deployed, Fort Hood will not be a ghost town.

The post, which normally has about 42,000 soldiers and about 500 Air Force personnel, has deployed about 1,300 soldiers — including about 1,100 members of the 13th Corps Support Command, and small aviation and medical units attached to the 4th Infantry.

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Families won't be forgotten after the GIs are deployed, Con't.

The Fort Hood community also includes about 17,000 military family members on the post, and 35,000 in surrounding communities, Hassett said.

The 1st Cavalry Division's public affairs office would not discuss the number of troops to be deployed, or the nature of the deployment. The office issued a release stating that troops would be sent to "the U.S. Central Command's area of operations to support the President's global war against terrorism."



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Issue Date: March 10, 2003

New stop-loss restrictions expected to get OK soon

By [Rod Hafemeister](#) and [Gordon Trowbridge](#)

Times staff writers

Times staff writers

Defense Department officials are close to approving new stop-loss restrictions on retirements and separations that would affect about 21,000 Air Force members.

The plan is outlined in a Feb. 21 memo to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld from David Chu, the department's top manpower and personnel official. Air Force Times obtained a copy of the memo, which includes Chu's recommendation that Rumsfeld approve the plan.

If implemented, the stop-loss plan outlined in Chu's memo would affect 31 officer and 40 enlisted specialties. It would not affect the entire force, as did the stop-loss imposed after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Air Force and Defense Department officials were not available for comment on the memo at press time.

Chu's memo outlined several exceptions to the block on retirements and separations, including hardship discharges, members on terminal leave or those who have shipped personal goods in anticipation of leaving the service, and members affected by the previous stop-loss who had since established retirement or separation dates.

The move has been expected for weeks. Army and Marine Corps officials have implemented similar plans, and Air Force officials have said for weeks that they were studying stop-loss.

But speaking privately, officials close to the process said before the memo came to light it is almost certain some type of stop-loss will be implemented as the buildup for a potential war continues.

The memo does not specify which specialties will be included. But it is likely to include specialties such as special operations and security forces, which were among the last career fields released when stop-loss was lifted last August.

It's also likely that other career fields will be added to the stop-loss list in phases as needed.

Air Force officials had said earlier they had yet to decide whether officials will set specific dates for stop-loss announcements. That became one of the most contentious issues under the previous stop-loss order, as announcements came days or weeks after the promised date.

But Chu's memo says specialties will be evaluated every 60 days, which would roughly match the service's practice during the 2001 stop-loss.

In October 2001, Air Force leaders froze almost all retirements and separations, both active-duty and reserve component, as they geared up for the war on terrorism and homeland defense.

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New stop-loss restrictions expected to get OK soon, Con't.

At the time, they said the order was necessary because of uncertainties about who would be needed for missions that still were being defined.

They also said they did not want to repeat the mistakes made during the Kosovo campaign, when only certain career fields were placed under stop-loss and some airmen were given just a few days to separate or retire when it was lifted.

Exceptions were made for airmen on terminal leave or who had expended funds to move household goods. Commanders were encouraged to use a liberal waiver policy, releasing airmen who would suffer an excessive hardship if kept on active duty.



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Altus AFB, OK



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Braddock addresses base closures, budget and proposed state lottery

By **MARK GLENN**

ALTUS TIMES

State Rep. David Braddock was the featured speaker at Friday's meeting of the Altus Kiwanis Club, and as expected, a good portion of his talk was about the budget, base closures and a proposed lottery.

Lawmakers are hashing out what some have termed the most difficult session in the history of the legislature.

"There's enough to make every one mad," said Braddock. "If you can't get mad there's something wrong with you."

The biggest problem is a \$677 million shortfall mainly because income tax, corporate income tax and sales tax collections are down. Braddock also said that too much money has been spent from the rainy day fund.

What it all amounts to is that cuts must be made. "Some agencies will probably be

cut and some agencies need to be cut," said Braddock. "To say we're going to have to do some belt tightening is one of the greatest understatements of all time. We're going to have to tighten our belts until it hurts."

Braddock said education is at the forefront of legislator's thoughts, but Gov. Henry's lottery proposal to fund education is not the answer. It is estimated the lottery will put \$200 million to \$300 million a year into education.

"It will help, but its not the answer," said Braddock. "So many people on both sides of the issue are passionate about this. " I can't win either way I go."

Braddock said at this time he is in favor of sending the issue to a vote of the people, but questions whether there is enough support even to get the lottery issue out of the House into the Senate.

Braddock also outlined some measures taken by the House on Monday that is designed to help military installations with the 2005 BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) process.

A Oklahoma Strategic Planning Commission was created which will gather information from state bases on their needs and getting that information to the legisla-

"To say we're going to have to do some belt tightening is one of the greatest understatements of all time...

-State Rep. David Braddock

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BRADDOCK

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tors.

Also an Office Of Defense Affairs was created to do an assessment of state bases to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

Braddock said he hoped legislators can find \$4 million in funding to help the Oklahoma bases stay off the closure list. A proposal from a task force that Braddock chaired is asking for \$250,000 in funding for communities of all five military bases. They are also asking for \$2.75 million to be distributed for job training, educational programs, infrastructure needs and other initiatives designed to promote the welfare of the state's bases.

"There are a lot of communities across the county that are very concerned," said Braddock. The decision in the '05 BRAC is probably going to be as potentially as large a

decision as was made when Judge Austin and a group from this area encouraged Congress to put in Lake Altus. That's how big this decision is. "It's life or death for this area, it's life or death for a

lot of areas in the state of Oklahoma," he said.



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Award winning program in action

PART TWO Of Two

By HEATHER GRAY

ALTUS TIMES

Brian Briscoe and his family began their day with a cheerful early morning greeting from their host, Tech.Sgt. Brian Williams, founder of "Pilot for a Day."

The program focuses on lifting the spirits of chronically ill children through an eventful day spent on the air force base interacting with military personnel, getting hands on experience in a simulator, and touring aircraft.

So because of hard work and humility on Brian Williams' part, earlier this week at AAFB was all about lit-

tle Brian Briscoe who has neuroblastoma, a cancerous tumor that attacks the kidneys. The day began with a warm welcome to little Brian, his mother Elena, and older brother Cody Briscoe. Many of the members of the 56th Airlift Squadron and the other flying squadrons, turned out to greet the family and present Brian with gifts of scarves, patches and even coins with special insignias. The group watched a video on the C-5 Galaxy, the aircraft on which Brian and his entourage would later tour. Donning his new attire of a flight suit and jacket complete with patches, Brian headed over to the air traffic control tower where he enjoyed watching the planes take off and

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Award winning program in action, Con't.

land.

"I'm so glad it's a good day for him," said Brian's mother, Elena as they climbed the stairs to the top of the tower. "We were so worried he would be sick today, but his energy levels seem to be high." After the trip to the tower, Brian boarded a van that took him out to the flight line where he was given an exclusive tour of one of the C-5 aircraft he had seen from the tower. He sat in the pilot's seat, climbed up and down the stairs and excitedly ran through the cavernous belly of the plane, taking it all in. Despite the cold weather that blasted everyone while traveling between the stops and the van, Brian couldn't wait to get outside and move on to the next thing.

After a break for lunch at the club, the group was running ahead of schedule and had a bit of time to kill. They filled the time with an official portrait of Brian in his flight suit done by the base photo shop. Brian's brother

Cody also had a photo taken, with the bottom of the photo reading, "Co-Pilot for a Day." Every unfilled moment, Brian found something to occupy his time, whether it was playing "I Spy" with Williams, or scavenging animal crackers from a Colonel's office. But out of everything, Brian's favorite activity was flying the C-5 simulator.

The simulator held his undivided attention for nearly two hours, quite the feat for a four-year-old boy. "He seems to be a natural at it (the simulator), and I think he really enjoys it," said Major Chris Leist, flying the simulator with Brian. During the simulator time prior to "take off," Brian turned to the window and saluted; customary of a pilot but completely impromptu. The gesture both surprised and touched the crew members. Following the salute he turned to Maj. Leist and gave him a thumbs up and a big

smile. Everyone in the room choked up because all knew that for at least that moment Brian wasn't thinking about feeling sick, he was having a good time.

"I loved the simulator the most," said Brian of his favorite part of the day. "I got to fly the plane over a grain elevator!" His love for farm equipment remained present even when introduced to exciting new things. "I still want to be a John Deere truck driver or a doctor when I grow up," he said. "But maybe I'll be a pilot too," the bright eyed little boy added.

No matter what Brian decides to be when he grows up, one thing is certain for now: he is touching a lot of lives along the way.

"Everyone I talked to about Brian prior to his participation in the program said he was just awesome," said Williams. "Having now met him I just don't know if awesome is even adequate

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Award winning program in action, Con't.

enough. He and his family are truly remarkable."

So at the end of the day, the remarkable little boy was honored with a ceremony where Colonel Bob Settle, Vice Wing Commander of the 97th Air Mobility Wing, pinned a pair of wings on Brian's flight suit before an audience of pilots and air crew members. The eighth participant in the "Pilot for a Day" program at AAFB was a success.

Williams' goal for the program is for it to be available at every Air Force Base worldwide so that all children who desire to be a part of the program can be.

"With everything going on in the world, we should still be able to take time to do something like this," said Williams. "In the Air Force we abide by three core values: integrity, excellence in all we do, and service before self, which I feel applies to the community as well," he added.

"We aren't just people who hide behind these fences here at the base. We care about what goes on outside the gate and the "Pilot for a Day" program is just one way that we can reach out to those we share the community with," said Williams.

"My parents always taught me that no matter what I do in life to just make a difference. I believe that kids are our future and if we invest in them we are investing in our future. (We should) feel fortunate to have kids



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Altus Times photo by Heather Gray

Brian salutes Col. Bob Settle, 97th AMW/CV, in the air lifter auditorium after receiving his wings.

like Brian Briscoe. Now I know why people in this town embrace him so much," said Williams. "Although Brian is the

youngest child to ever participate in the program, he is what the "Pilot for a Day" program is all about."

For more information on the "Pilot for A Day" program or to participate, call 477-2910.

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Altus Times photo by Heather Gray

Brian Briscoe receives a scarf from "Pilot for a Day" founder Brian Williams.

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Little Rock AFB AR



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Task force looks at clean air initiatives, EPA comments

BY ERICA FONTANA
EDITOR

Legislation targeted toward gaining control of air pollution in Central Arkansas was discussed and approved to go to the next step at the Central Arkansas Clean Air Task Force meeting Tuesday in Little Rock.

Comments from the Environmental Protection Agency were used as a springboard for revisions to drafts of the Central Arkansas Ozone Flex Plan and the Memorandum of Agreement. A report from the Legislative Subcommittee was presented, in addition to an update from the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

All of the items were geared toward the task force's ongoing efforts to stay in attainment, which means they would not be designated by the EPA because of high ozone levels. Currently the four county region (Pulaski, Faulkner, Saline and Lonoke) are not meeting guidelines, but they have some time to make things right. After the coming summer, the three year period in which Central Arkansas is examined will be complete, and, the EPA will then deliver its recommendations.

"This summer coming up is the most important one," said John Hoffpauer, a spokesman for Metroplan who serves on the task force. The governor should be responding to a request from the EPA

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shortly for proposed designated areas, but has not as of this week. When the governor reveals his recommendations, the EPA is not bound by what he says, but will consider it for next year.

When the draft Memorandum of Agreement was sent to the EPA in December of 2002, the agency began an immediate review of language, exclusion and inclusion of items, and needed estimates and measures on such things as emission reductions. The comments were addressed for the first time by the Central Arkansas Clean Air Task Force Tuesday.

A more precise quantity of emission reductions from proposed measures and the time frame in determining the feasibility of the Ozone Flex Plan were some major concerns from the EPA, and the group discussed changes, then viewed actions and responses that had already been suggested.

Plans to implement a program that will reduce air pollution included a proposed bill to establish a trust fund for installation of vapor recovery systems at facilities that dispense motor fuel. The bill would reimburse owners and operators of such facilities.

The Vapor Recovery System Trust Fund Act is a response to the revisions to the Federal Clean Air Act Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and the fact that areas in the region may violate the new standards set forth. Because of that, the EPA could designate those areas under non-attainment, which would impose federal mandates and possibly impede economic development, the bill states.

The new vapor recovery system would have two stages. Stage one would apply to the transfer of fuel from a transport tank into a station-



ERICA FONTANA

MEMBERS OF THE Central Arkansas Clean Air Task Force tackled proposed amendments, viewed draft forms of legislation and discussed comments from the Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday in efforts to meet federal guidelines in the near future.

ary storage tank, while stage two would be the transfer of fuel from the stationary storage tank into a motor vehicle fuel tank. The vapors from the fuel would be recovered instead of releasing them into the air, reducing pollution and the formation of ozone.

In addition to the bill, an Air Quality Incentive Plan based on Texas legislation was drafted and introduced by Tommy Foltz, coordinator of the Clean Cities Steering Committee. "The bill provides funding for emission reductions," said Foltz. The bill would give the state Department of Environmental

Quality tools to assure that the air is safe and meets federal standards. Multi-pollutant approaches to solve the state's environmental problems, a Clean Fleet Incentive Plan and funding of research and development which would result in creating new business and industry were main objectives of the bill.

On April 15, 2003, the designations will be administered by the EPA. "We may not be designated if we manage to keep our ozone levels low enough that we can slip through this thing," said Hoffpauer. A public awareness program spearheaded by the Ozone Action Days steering

committee will be unveiled next month, involving radio and television public service announcements and advertising. Corporate sponsors will also be sought for the campaign, in hopes of educating the public on how they can help with voluntary actions to reduce emissions and make the air in Central Arkansas cleaner.

Sponsors are being sought for the draft pieces of legislation that the task force took option on Tuesday. The next meeting of the group has not yet been announced, but the steering committee will meet again in March.





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No clue yet on what killed airman

March 3, 2003

Police are still awaiting test results on how an airman based at Sheppard Air Force Base died Friday.

The fully-clothed body of Sr. Airman Shelby Orelup, 22, was found in a ditch at 2:35 p.m. Friday in the 2000 block of Sheppard Access Road.

Sgt. Joe Snyder said autopsy results on Orelup's remains have not yet been forwarded to the department. There were no visible signs of a struggle, however, he said.

Orelup was an instructor with the 366th Training Squadron at the base.

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Personal choices

March 04, 2003

City election hits close to home.

Today is the day when the election process becomes the most personal.

It's the day when we elect those people who will represent us at the most basic level.

We're not electing someone we may never meet personally to represent us in the far-off place called Washington, D.C. We're not electing someone to represent us at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City.

No, this is the day when we decide from among our friends and neighbors who will make decisions that will affect us every day. It's the day we choose who will serve as mayor and members of the Enid City Commission.

City government may not be the most glamorous of public service. The men and women who serve as Enid's government don't even get paid for what they do.

That is part of what makes it so personal and so important. These are men and women who have decided they want to give back to their community. They have a vision of where they want this city to go, a vision of the future course Enid will take.

The men and women we elect today will face great challenges that will have an tremendous impact on the future of Enid, not the least of which is the 2005 round of base closings. We all know the important role Vance Air Force Base plays in our community. The people we elect today will be the leaders who see Enid through what is shaping up to be a watershed time in our history.

The candidates on the ballot haven't taken that responsibility lightly.

Neither should any of us. They've done their part by putting themselves up for election. Now, we must do our part by going to the polls and casting our votes. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The slate of candidates includes:

* Bryce Kennedy and Irv Honigsberg for mayor.

* Jerry Erwin and Mike Whatley for Ward 1 on the city commission.

* David Stanley and Don Rose for Ward 2. John Garrison also is on the ballot, although he withdrew from the race. However, he did not withdraw in time to keep his name off the ballot.

* Casey Garrard, Shirley Marquardt and John Hodgden for Ward 5.

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City election hits close to home, Con't.

Also on the ballot will be nine proposed changes to the city charter. As we said, this is when the election process is at its most personal level.

We aren't electing faces we only seen in the newspaper or on television.

We are electing the people who will run our city, our community, our home.

Do your part. Get out and vote.

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Messages from home

By Tippi Rasp, Staff Writer

March 04, 2003

Students send care package to troops.

First- and third-graders at Hoover Elementary School have been writing letters to virtual strangers.

But their letters read as though they're writing to long-lost friends and relatives.

"We've been saying we love them and care about them and really appreciate what they're doing for us," said third-grader Nicole Nixon, 9.

Students in Shawna Tanner's third-grade class have taken time recently to collect goodies and write letters to send in a care package to overseas troops.

Tanner's brother, Chad Mittelstet, is stationed somewhere near the Iraq-Kuwait border. The care package will be sent to Mittelstet, and Tanner has included a letter asking her brother to share the letters and goodies with other troops.

Students have collected notebook paper, candy, decks of cards, gum and a Hoover Elementary T-shirt. They also included letters to soldiers, a stuffed animal and a disposable camera. Tanner hopes her brother will take photos and send back the camera. She would use the photos to help students visualize where troops are stationed.

Most students told troops in their letters to stay safe and return home soon.

"I said be very, very safe and stay really healthy and I hope you come back home safe," said Tyler McNeill, 9.

Students send care package to troops, Con't.

Tanner's group and their first-grade buddy class both are writing letters to troops. First-graders in Judy



Alexandria Chick and Taylor Jokerst load a box to be sent to deployed troops Monday afternoon at Hoover Elementary. (Staff Photo by PAUL RUTHERFORD)

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Manjarrez's class wrote letters Monday to Ray Henry, nephew of Manjarrez. Henry also is stationed in Kuwait.

Manjarrez tries to help students visualize where troops are and what they are doing so far from home.

"We look at it on the globe," Manjarrez said. "They know they're protecting our country. We've talked about it being across the ocean and in another continent."

Manjarrez brought a photo of her nephew to class, hoping students would better be able to "visualize what's going on."

"It's affecting everyone when you think about it," Manjarrez said.

Students in Manjarrez's class realize what it means for men and women to be away from home because a fellow student's mother is stationed in Fort Sill with a branch of the armed forces.

Students have acknowledged Derek Winter's mother, Misty, isn't at home with her family. The class also has written letters to Winter.

"They told her they really like her son and that they wished she would hurry and return home," Manjarrez said.

Tanner said she planned to send out the care package this week. She hopes troops are inspired by her students' letters.

"I said to keep safe, come home and we miss you," said 9-year-old Seth Harris.



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Sheppard AFB, TX



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Briefly

Officials ID woman found along road

The body of a woman found alongside Sheppard Access Road Friday afternoon has been identified as Senior Airman Shelby Orelup, a spokesman with Sheppard Air Force Base said Sunday.

"We were shocked and saddened by this news," Lt. Col. John Skinner said. "As Gen. (Arthur) Rooney said, a member of the Team Sheppard family is no longer with us and that's a sad thing."

The 22-year-old was an instructor with the 868th Training Squadron, Skinner said.

Orelup's body was found about 2:30 p.m. Friday in the ditch near the 2100 block of Sheppard Access Road. It was sent to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office in Fort Worth for an autopsy. Police have not indicated if they suspect foul play was involved.

Air Force personnel were in touch with and assisting Orelup's family, Skinner said.

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Sheppard AFB, TX



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Base cuts back acute care hours

Troop deployment cause of reduction

John Ingle

Times Record News

The Sheppard Air Force Base hospital has cut back operations because of recent deployments, officials said.

Deployment of personnel from the 82nd Medical Group and low staffing don't equate to a change in the quality of care, though, Lt. Col. Thomas McCauley, deputy commander of the group, said.

"We lost a large enough group that we couldn't continue to deliver care the same way we could before," McCauley said. "But the 82nd Medical Group will still take care of all of the health care needs of all of

our beneficiaries."

The two major areas of the hospital affected are the Acute Care Clinic and the Multi-Specialty Unit, officials said. The clinic, once open 24 hours seven days a week, is now in operation from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Multi-Specialty Unit's hours have changed also, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

World events and the return of medical personnel will dictate when the two areas of the hospital go back to normal hours, Col. John McCafferty, a surgeon and commander of the 82nd Medical Operations

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Squadron, said.

"The plan is that as soon as our personnel return, or a sufficient number returns ... we will return to normal operations," he said.

Meanwhile, patients will be admitted to United Regional Health Care System for all surgeries or illnesses requiring overnight admission, officials said. Sheppard physicians are being credentialed to see and treat patients at URHCS.

The hospital also recently went through some hours and service changes when the emergency room at the base closed Jan. 4 for renovations.

As always, active duty members and dependents living on base that have life-threatening emergencies should call 911, McCauley said. The base will still have 24-hour ambulance coverage seven days a week.

For non-emergency injuries or health concerns, he said a physician would be available by

"Since we have after-hours coverage in the Acute Care Clinic ... once we close, our beneficiaries can call 87-MEDIC (678-8342), and they will be able to speak with someone to assess their needs and will be able to direct them," he said.

True emergencies, however, always go through the emergency room downtown, he said.

Other clinics, such as the Family Practice, Student Health and Pediatric clinic's hours will remain the same, McCafferty said. The only change customers might experience is fewer staff members in each clinic.

McCauley said retirees or active duty members and dependents who do not live in Wichita Falls should go to the "nearest appropriate facility

to care for their problem."

The added care at United Regional shouldn't affect the hospital's overall patient load, Kim Maddin, URHCS spokeswoman, said.

"Right now what we've seen is one to two patients a day, which, in our grand scheme of things, is fine," Maddin said.

The hospital, on average, has 230 patients admitted per day, she said. That's not including emergency room admissions. Continuing the strong relationship between Sheppard and Wichita Falls, the hospital is prepared to help care for the needs of military beneficiaries during the low staff levels at the base.

Ward Coston, a retired veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, said that given his experiences in the military, he understood the change in hours.

"It's not only making it hard on the people who are deploying, it makes it hard on the people who are left behind," he said. "They have to pick up their work because the hospital has to function."

The changes shouldn't affect when retirees go to the base, Coston said. From speaking with other veterans, most of them have gone to URHCS after base hospital hours for some time.

He added that he didn't believe the hospital would try to eliminate the care that it has provided for military retirees.

"The service that we get out here is out of this world," Coston said. "If we were millionaires, we couldn't pay for better service."

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AETC Bases News Clips

Vance AFB OK



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Vance chaplain works to meet faith needs

By Robert Barron
Staff Writer

Dan Nelms is a spiritual man. He promotes the spiritual experience of all Protestant personnel at Vance Air Force Base as senior Protestant chaplain.

Even as a chaplain, his job is mission-oriented.

Nelms is second in command to Col. Raul

Sanchez, the chief Catholic chaplain and wing chaplain at Vance.

Their duties are all related to the Vance mission. Everything must be done to accomplish the mission.

"We are a visible reminder of the holy," Nelms said. "We support the free exercise of religion, very broad a pluralistic. We will support any faith as chaplains.

Although only Protestant and Catholic services are held at the Vance chapel, services for personnel of other faiths are available off-base.

There are Jewish services at Fort Sill in Lawton, and at synagogues in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Information on Islamic, Buddhist or other faith activities are available at the base chapel.

"Our mission also includes providing spiritual care and ethical leadership for Team Vance," he said.

That leadership is found through many opportunities chaplains have such as counseling, and pastoral care, worship, and providing moral, spiritual and ethical advice.

Their mission is based on outcomes.

"We seek to meet the spiritual and religious needs of the personnel

and their families. To enhance operational readiness and with that comes combat effectiveness," he said.

Religion provides the inner support for combat situations, he said.

Nelms is a member of an evangelical church, a small Protestant faith group and was endorsed for the chaplaincy by the National Association of Evangelicals.

Among his other duties are providing confidential counseling.

"We are the only agency that can provide complete confidentiality to enlisted members and their families," he said.

As a chaplain, Nelms carries a Geneva Convention

Card signifying him as a noncombatant and he does not carry a weapon.

Nelms entered the Air Force at the age of 40 and has completed 14 years service.

He was professor of religious education and academic dean at a small religious college in Canada at the time he joined.

Reflecting back on his biblical background, Nelms said recalls a familiar verse from Romans:

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

That quote from Romans 12:18 is on his mind.

Chaplains recognize that war is in the history of humanity and support those who are going into combat, based on the teachings of the individual chaplain's faith, he said.

"We don't say that God doesn't recognize war and you're on your own. God supports those in war because he loves them," Nelms said. "He recognizes that foreign countries will always allow you to live at peace."

Our mission also includes providing spiritual care and ethical leadership for Team Vance.

— Dan Nelms

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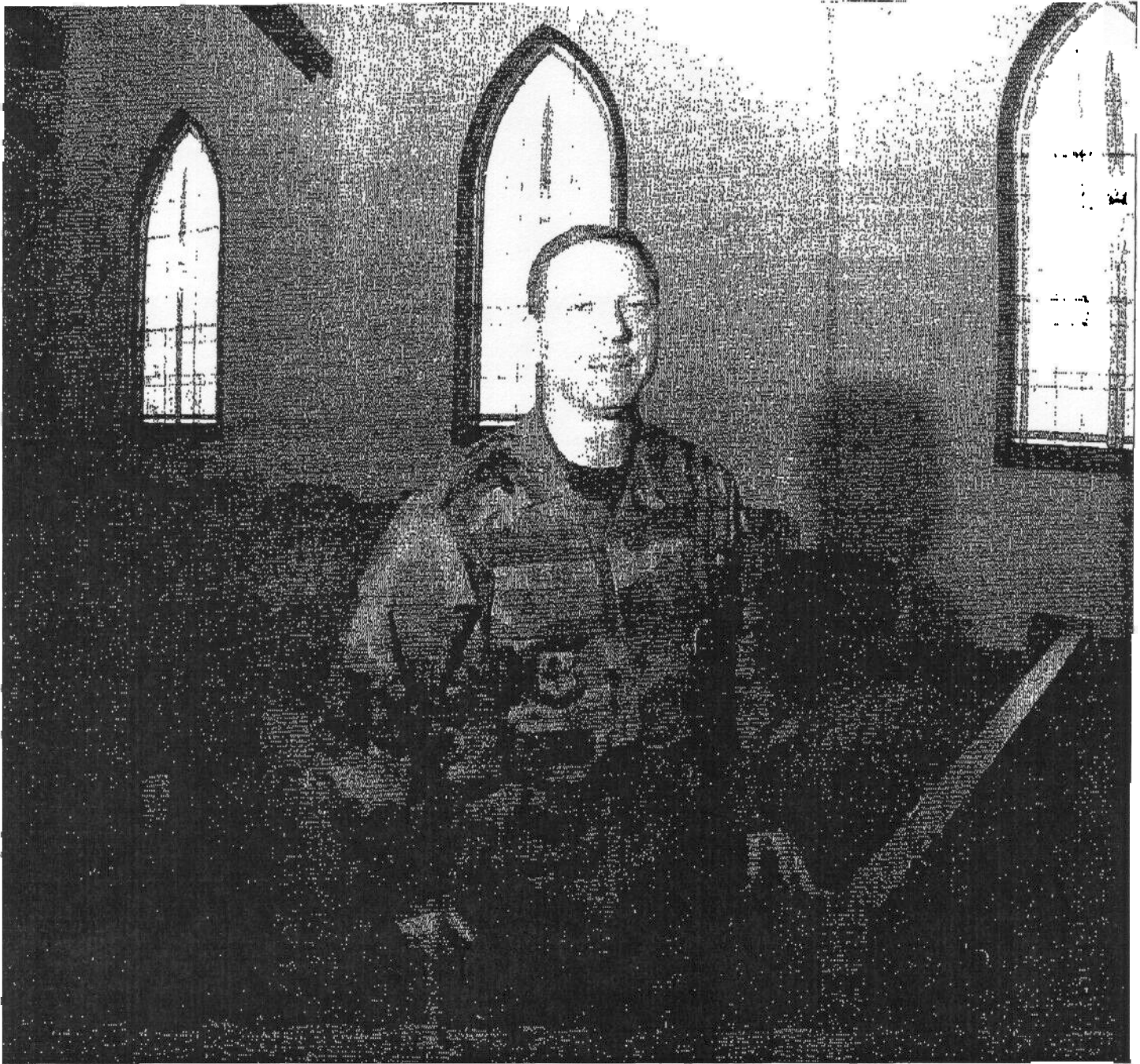
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Vance chaplain works to meet faith needs, Con't.



Dan Nelms is senior Protestant chaplain at Vance Air Force Base. (Staff Photo)

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